

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TAGS: EFISX ETRD CU
SUBJ: CUBAN FISHING BOAT PURCHASES

1. USINT OFFICER (GLASSMAN), OCTOBER 20, CALLED ON FERNANDO OTERO, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR OF CUBAPESCA, EXCLUSIVE CUBAN PURCHASER OF FISHING VESSELS AND EQUIPMENT. OTERO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY GOERGINA ALFALLA OF MINCEX.

2. OTERO SAID THAT ONLY CUBAN FISHING VESSEL CONSTRUCTION CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IS COMPLETION OF (A) ELEVEN ADDITIONAL RIO DAMUJI CLASS (3500 TON) STERN TRAWLERS IN SPAIN (FIFTEEN OF THESE TRAWLERS OUT OF TOTAL OF 26 HAVE ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED); AND (B) THREE ADDITIONAL TEN THOUSAND TON REFRIGERATED MOTHER SHIPS IN JAPAN. (ONE OUT OF A TOTAL OF FOUR OF THESE LARGE SHIPS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED. IN ADDITION, OTERO SAID, CUBA HAS FOUR OTHER MOTHER SHIPS IN SERVICE.) CURRENT CONSTRUCTION IS ALL BEING PAID FOR IN CURRENCY, NOT THROUGH BARTER FOR FISH PRODUCTS. BOTH SPANISH AND JAPANESE CONTRACTS WERE SIGNED ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO.

3. OTERO SAID CUBA HAS ONLY ONE TANKER DEDICATED TO SERVICING FISHING FLEET. EACH MOTHER SHIP, IN ADDITION, HAS CAPACITY TO
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CARRY THREE THOUSAND TONS OF (EXTRA?) FUEL. GIVEN SMALL FUEL CAPACITY OF MOTHER SHIP, CUBANS IN FUTURE EXPANDED HIGH SEAS OPERATIONS WILL EITHER HAVE TO RELY ON SOVIET REFUELING SUPPORT, BUY MORE TANKERS, OR GAIN MORE PORT ACCESS.

4. OTERO SAID CUBANS, BECAUSE OF HARD CURRENCY SQUEEZE, WILL PROBABLY UNDERTAKE NO NEW BOAT CONSTRUCTION IN CAPITALIST WORLD

IN 1978. HE SAID THAT GDR MADE GOOD FISHING BOATS, BUT THEIR CONSTRUCTION CAPACITY APPEARED FULLY BOOKED. GDR, HOWEVER, HAS NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY APPROACHED BY CUBANS TO UNDERTAKE ANY CONSTRUCTION. (COMMENT: PRESUMABLY GDR, WHOSE SUGAR BEET OUTPUT IS PREDICTED TO RISE BY SOME 20 PERCENT IN 1977-78, WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO TAKE CUBAN SUGAR IN PAYMENT. BARTER FOR FISH PRODUCTS WITH EE'S IS DIFFICULT FOR CUBANS SINCE ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT OF THEIR FISH EXPORTS APPARENTLY NOW GO TO CAPITALIST WORLD FOR HARD CURRENCY.)

5. OTERO SAID THAT CUBANS' MAIN IMPORT REQUIREMENTS IN COMING YEARS WOULD BE LONG-LINE BOATS, REFRIGERATED MOTHER SHIPS, AND POSSIBLY TANKERS. CUBANS ARE INTERESTED IN BUYING TUNA BOATS IN U.S. WHEN EMBARGO EVENTUALLY LIFTED. CUBANS ALSO WANT TO ACQUIRE MORE SHRIMP BOATS FOR DISTANT OPERATIONS. (COMMENT: SHRIMP BOATS ARE PRESUMABLY DESIRED FOR ANGOLA OPERATIONS.) NONETHELESS, BECAUSE OF CUBAN FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, NEAR-TERM PERSPECTIVES FOR ADDITIONAL PURCHASES DO NOT APPEAR FAVORABLE, OTERO SAID.
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